THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN) : (a) Details of the Foreign Trade Policy are available at the website of Director General of Foreign Trade at http://degft.delhi.nic.in. The copies of the document are available at the Parliament Library.

(b) India's export target for all the products for the year 2005-06 has been fixed at 92 billion dollars.

(c) Foreign Trade Policy has been declared agriculture, textiles, gems and jewellery and marine sectors as thrust sectors because of their large employment generation potential. The specific facilities given to these sectors have been defined in chapter 1B of the foreign Trade Policy (2004-09). Besides, all other major export facilitation schemes continue to be available to promote exports from these sectors.

Curbs on indiscriminate import of cotton and edible oil

4347. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to curb indiscriminate import of cotton and edible oils which had led to a fall in prices of these commodities in the domestic market leading to a crisis;

(b) if so, the modalities and mode of monitoring such curbs;

(c) if not, the reasons for not implementing vigorous constant monitoring curbs;

(d) whether Government propose to increase import duty on cotton and edible oils and impose restrictive import quantities measures to encourage domestic sales; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN) : (a) to (e) Quantitative restrictions on the import of various items including cotton & edible oils have been removed as a part of the process of econorpic liberalization and also in terms of our international commitments and obligations. The

removal of Quantitative Restrictions does not automatically remove all the protection available to the domestic producers.

India can regulate imports through adjustments in customs Tariff within the bound rates. The rates of Customs duty on agriculfural produce are generally higher than the peak rate of customs duty of 15%, and range from 30% to 105%. The Central Board of Excise and Customs also fixes minimum trariff rates for various edible oils such as crude palm oil, RBD palm oil, crude palmolein, crude soyabean oil, etc. This is to ensure that there is no under valuation of prices in the landed cost of imported edible oils which may adversely affect the production of oilseeds in the country. In addition, the import duty on crude and refined palm oil has recently been raised upwards to 80% and 90%, to provide necessary protection to domestic growers of oil seeds. In cases of prices falling below the specified levels, the Government undertakes procurement operations, to ensure that farmers interest are protected. In case of cotton the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics' data of import from April 04 to Feb 05 shows that there has been a decline in import, so there is no question of a fall in prices due to excessive import.

The non-tariff regulations through which imports are regulated include compliance with the previsions of the Food Adulteration Act, 1954, Meat Food Product Order, Packaging requirements, Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (PTS) measures etc. The import of 300 sensitive items including major food items is being monitored on a regular basis by the Government for checking any surge in imports.

Decline in export of molasses and fruits/vegetables

4348. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether export of molasses and fruits/vegetables seeds has declined in the last two years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to increase the exports?